of forests are being managed under JFM programme through 44,886 village level JFM committees in 26 States.

Conference of State Forest Ministers

3869. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's reaction on the recommendations/ decisions taken in the conference of State Forest Ministers, held in Coimbatore in January, 2000; and

(b) by when these are likely to be implemented, to protect the Wild Life?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The National Conference on Environment and Forests held on 29-30 January, 2001 at Coimbatore adopted the following resolutions for the protection of wild life in the country:

1. Wild animals do considerable damage to agricultural crops in areas adjoining national parks and sanctuaries, causing considerable concern, thereby requiring formulation of an appropriate insurance scheme for compensating damage to agricultural crops falling within five kilometers of national parks and sanctuaries.
2. Existing provisions for payment of compensation in the cases of deaths due to wild animals were emphasized, with the objective of ensuring compaliance by the State/Union Territories Governments.
3. The ban on recruitment of forestry personnel shall be lifted and the vacancies filled up immediately on the lines of Police Department. The field formations shall be reorganized into viable units and be provided with adequate mobility, fire arms and effective communication network.
4. An effective mechanism for intelligence gathering and data base of habitual offenders should be developed for preventing wildlife crimes.

5. Adequate expertise shall be developed for prosecuting offenders and training be organized for undertaking investigations.

6. Steps shall be taken immediately for designating special courts for wildlife offences.

7. Create effective enforcement infrastructure both within protected areas and outside protected area to prevent poaching.

Implementation of these recommendations is the responsibility of State Governments. Government of India provides financial and technical assistance for infrastructure, weapons, communication equipments, vehicles and conservancy works for mitigating the short comings listed above except for placement of staff.

Receding of Gangotri Glacier

3870. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gangotri Glacier is receding at an alarming pace;

(b) the reasons found out for such significant changes in the shape and position of the Glacier; and

(c) the measures taken to ensure that the role of human interference does not have any impact on the Glacier?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. According to observations made by Geological Survey of India, the glacier is receding at a gradual pace and has since 1935 vacated an area of 0.57 sq. km. only. The earth has witnessed several phases of glacial and interglacial period. It is a natural phenomenon. Presently the earth is passing through an interglacial phase whereby the ice bodies throughout the world are receding and the recession of glacier is a natural phenomenon. The Government is aware of the environemental concerns and has supported conservation activities in the Gangotri region including afforestation, establishment of community toilets, removal of garbage and promotion of eco-tourism.